

Yes, he could. They all trudged out to survey the problem.

Soon they returned to the warm kitchen. Could they use the phone to call wife-and-mother to come after them with a four-wheel drive. Yes indeed! But, since it was nearly noon, "Let's have some tea and cookies while you wait. The tea kettle is always ready."

The flow of conversation was warm and friendly. They were building a vacation cabin in the Poconos, nearly finished now. Yes, they had other, younger children.

Our children? One is away at college, the other, teaching in another state. Yes, Ralph grew up here on this farm. Soon help arrived. Could they leave their pick-up in our driveway until next week? Yes, of course. We'll keep an eye on it. Then, good-byes. The four-wheel-drive vehicle had arrived.

We were eating a bit of lunch when we heard thumps on the front porch, then a dull knock on the door. A whole family was sitting in a station wagon in our driveway — with no snow tires. After repeated tries, they had given up getting up either hill. The baby's bottle needed warm-

ing. Could we warm it for them? Could they use our telephone? Did we have a tractor for pulling?

Yes, yes, yes to all three!

Do we enjoy living in the country where it's so quiet and peaceful and relaxing?

We-ell, yes? Again my husband trudged outside in his wet chore jacket and snowy boots, started the tractor, hooked up the chain and pulled the car to the top of the hill.

This time he was gone for a long time. Several cars had been trying over and over to ascend first one hill, then the other, without success. Halfway up, a bearded young Clydesdale of a man jumped out of his car and shouted to my husband, "I give up! Can you help me out with that tractor?"

Yes, he could and he did.

The snow was deeper now and still falling. Two or three more cars, some with snow tires, some without, were pulled out of the ditch and up the hill, until, just about dark, the snowplow finally came through. My weary husband came in, cold and soaking wet from his "peaceful and relaxing" Sunday. It was already chore-time, but a hot supper and a change of clothing would have to come first.

Many months later, returning from a trip to attend our son's wedding, we found a mysterious package on the doorstep. "A late wedding gift!" we exclaimed.

Then, upon rewrapping it for mailing, we discovered a lovely tin box of cookies, a package of tea bags, a jar of instant coffee and a handwritten note: "Dear Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, many, many thanks for your warm hospitality. Your friends from last winter."

## About the author

>Marie Allen Curtis grew up in the Hudson Valley and Finger Lakes region of New York State, and was graduated from the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio in 1945. She married Ralph K. Curtis in 1947 and had 3 sons.

Their 150-acre Journey's End Farm is Ralph's childhood home. They produce maple syrup (about 2,500 taps), raise dairy calves, and run a small, family-centered farm camp for 30 boys and girls, ages 7 to 12. They are active members of Northeastern Pennsylvania Maple Producers Association, Wayne-Pike Audubon Society, Fellowship of Reconciliation and Society of Friends.